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## The Bridge Conference

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been understood. The part of Sweden that is south of Göteborg at one time belonged to Denmark, which accounts for the fact that southern Swedish is marked by a distinctly “Southern drawl.” So, in the broad accent of the province, the man looked straight at me and said, “*Ahrr-ton och fyrtio-fyra* (18.44),” or, 6:44 p.m. My mother was much amused by the exchange. By lavish praise, she convinced me to think it really was worth the effort to try to speak Swedish after all, I was going to be there nearly a year. She was not wrong.

When the train arrived in Markaryd, we were met at the station by my Uncle Andrew and my cousin, Allan, who was about my age. The four-mile ride by taxi out to Hannabad was memorable. It was totally dark, and there was about a foot of snow on the ground. Once the village of Markaryd was behind us, I could only see what was illuminated by the headlights of the car. The unpaved, snow-covered road was barely visible, though the driver seemed to know exactly where every turn was supposed to be. We rode uphill and downhill, over little bridges, and through a deep, deep forest with enormous evergreen trees whose



snow-laden branches seemed to sweep the ground in greeting. It was incredibly beautiful and I knew that somewhere at the end of the forest, a welcome was awaiting us.

I was not disappointed. The woods eventually opened out into the hamlet of Hannabad where I could now see a few lights here and there, and then the car stopped. We were at my Uncle Andrew’s house. Aunt Gerda, a slightly younger version of my mother, welcomed us and introduced us to her two little girls, my cousins, and to *Morfar* (=“mother’s

father”), my grandfather. Reunion was heady stuff. The tears flowed freely, and everyone was talking at the same time.

I could tell my mother was very, very happy.

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## The Bridge Conference in Karlstad in September 2006

In late September, Wednesday 27th to Sunday October 1st there will be an interesting conference being held in Karlstad, Sweden, the capital of the County and Province of Värmland. The conference is organized by the Kinship Center in cooperation with the Swedish Council of America, who wants to broaden its contacts with modern Sweden.

The conference language will be English.

There will be several social events but also a number of workshops, 24 in all are planned. Their topics range from genealogy through folk costumes and wood carving to Swedish food, and life in modern Sweden.

On Friday there will be a number of excursions, ten in all. Their des-

tinations vary from the Nobel Museum in Karlskoga to Mårbacka, home of famous author Selma Lagerlöf to the Viking Ship *Glad of Gillberga* to the gourmet inn at Grythyttan. Two excursions also go to Dalsland, to The House of Straw, the Aqueduct at Håverud and many other interesting places.

The conference is open to anyone, who is interested in meeting with Swedes, active in preserving and showing local history, as many of the participants will be active in local historical societies (*hembygdsföreningar*).

The conference fee is \$400. The costs include the conference, all meals from Wednesday dinner through Saturday banquet, enter-

tainments and transportation during the conference. Lodging is extra and available in various price ranges. On the web site it says that the conference fee should be paid by 1 June, but it will still be possible to register during the summer be.

Documentation of the conference will be sent to the participants within one month after the conference.

You can find more details at [www.swedishcouncil.org/conference.htm](http://www.swedishcouncil.org/conference.htm)

or at [www.emigrantregistret.s.se/conf-en.htm](http://www.emigrantregistret.s.se/conf-en.htm)

Välkomna! You will see your SAG editor there!